United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1221
8 September 1992

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General holds meetings in Moscow with Russian President and Foreign Minister; returns to New York after stop-over in Paris where he holds talks with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas.

+ Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Marrack Goulding, reviews problems in carrying out mandate of UNPROFOR; Secretary-General to submit further progress report to Security Council on situation in former Yugoslavia.

+ Secretary-General calls for "determined and unequivocal leadership" in Angola during present delicate stage in peace process in that country and with elections imminent.

+ Iraq rejects "accusations" made in wake of threats against United Nations personnel in northern part of Iraq.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on his way back from Moscow, stopped in Paris where he held a meeting this morning with the Foreign Minister of France, Roland Dumas. The Secretary-General and the Foreign Minister discussed Yugoslavia, Cambodia and various other conflict regions.

On Friday, 4 September, the Secretary-General held meetings in Moscow with President Boris N. Yeltsin of the Russia Federation and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev. He also had a telephone conversation with Eduard Shevardnadze, Chairman of the State Council of Georgia.

The Secretary-General began the day by speaking on the telephone with Mr. Shevardnadze, who informed him of the accords that had been reached the previous evening between the Russian Federation, Georgia and representatives of Abkhazia. He asked the Secretary-General to send a mission to the region and to open a United Nations office in Georgia. The Secretary-General congratulated Mr. Shevardnadze on the signing of the accords and said that the

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United Nations would do all that it could to support them. He promised to send a mission of goodwill to Georgia in the next few days, and said that he would consider favourably the request for a United Nations office.

Later in the morning, the Secretary-General was received by President Yeltsin who expressed Russia's full political cooperation with the United Nations and, in particular, expressed support for "An Agenda for Peace" and for the reforms of the Organization undertaken by the Secretary-General. The President announced that Russia, despite its economic difficulties, would pay $130 million to the Organization.

For his part, the Secretary-General thanked the President for Russia's cooperation with the United Nations, and for its participation in a number of United Nations peace-keeping operations. He referred, in particular to Yugoslavia, noting the useful role which Russia had also played at the London Conference. He said he was pleased to learn of Russia's efforts to meet its financial obligations to the United Nations, and hoped this would encourage other Member States to do likewise. He said that the United Nations would do all it could to provide technical assistance and advice to the Commonwealth of Independent States, and cited the decision taken earlier in the year to open six United Nations offices in those countries.

The Secretary-General said the United Nations would support Russia's efforts to help end conflicts in regions of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and recalled the two United Nations fact-finding missions that had been sent to Armenia and Azerbaijan. As for Moldova, he was pleased that the two fact-finding missions sent to that country had helped to calm the situation. With respect to Georgia, the Secretary-General commended President Yeltsin for Russia's role in helping to bring about a cessation of hostilities and had congratulated him on the signing of the accords. The Secretary-General shared the President's view regarding cooperation between the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and the Commonwealth of Independent States in conformity with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

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Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Marrack Goulding, told correspondents today that he spent last week in former Yugoslavia to inspect the four protected areas of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and had noted the "remarkable progress" made by the Force in carrying out its mandate, since his last visit in May. Mr. Goulding discussed with UNPROFOR Force Commander Satish Nambiar "any problems" which there might be and how support could be provided. He also met the leaders of the various parties for a discussion of the need to for better cooperation with UNPROFOR. The Secretary-General would submit a further progress report on UNPROFOR's performance to the Security Council "in the near future".

Mr. Goulding said the most severe problem was that the demilitarization of the protected areas had become stuck in the last phase of the plan, which called for the demilitarization of the police. The Serbian authorities had

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decided to form special militias, often armed with mortars, which they called police. It had also been impossible to begin the return of refugees to their homes, he said.

Asked whether there had been a rethinking of the need for protection in view of the steady violence against United Nations relief efforts, Mr. Goulding said that problem was a matter of considerable concern. The Secretary-General's report would clearly state his proposal to strengthen UNPROFOR with the ability to provide such protection should the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ask for it.

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Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, has called for "determined and unequivocal leadership" in Angola during the present delicate stage in the peace process in that country and with elections imminent.

A United Nations official said today that the Secretary-General had received a message last week from the President of Angola, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, expressing concern that the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) faction had not been co-operating fully in the implementation of the Angola Peace Accords. President dos Santos had also expressed concern that among some Angolans there was "mistrust" over the effectiveness of the United Nations Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM II).

The official said the Secretary-General had welcomed a meeting yesterday between the President of Angola and the President of UNITA, Jonas Savimbi and was sending messages to both of them, on the need - during a "crucial and very delicate stage in their peace process"- for leadership to stem the recent spate of violent incidents, and to give confidence to the people that the results of the forthcoming elections would be respected.

The Secretary-General was also drawing attention to "some major unfinished tasks" which the government and UNITA should urgently complete - such as the demobilisation of their armies, the formation of new Angolan Armed Forces, control of weapons, the full control of the national territory by the central administration and the formation of a representative and impartial police force.

The offical said the Secretary-General congratulated the Angolan people for their progress in recent months. The task now was to "complete the unfinished business of the peace process", ensuring that everyone who had registered was able to vote without intimidation of any kind.

On the concerns expressed by the Angolan President about the effectiveness of UNAVEM, Mr Boutros-Ghali said inquiries by his Special Representative for Angola, Margaret Anstee, on this matter almost always revealed widespread misunderstanding of the role of the UNAVEM. According to the Peace Accords, he noted, the Security Council's mandate for UNAVEM was not to organize or implement the cease-fire and electoral arrangements, but to observe and verify the monitoring process of the Angolan parties themselves.

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The Foreign Minister of Iraq, Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, has rejected "all direct or indirect accusations" made in the wake of threats against the United Nations personnel in the northern part of Iraq.

In a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 4 September, the Iraqi Minister said Iraq assumed full responsibility for the safety of United Nations staff, but security measures could only be effective if the United Nations staff was "closely coordinated with the competent Iraqi authorities".

Iraq had "warned" the United Nations officials in charge that "some parties loyal to the Western countries", together with Iranian and Kurdish elements protected by those countries, sought to cause problems with the United Nations staff in order to "tarnish Iraq's image and justify the conspiracies against Iraq". "Iraqi citizens clearly feel resentment towards the United Nations staff, but nothing personal is meant", Mr. Al-Sahaf said. The Iraqi people would "feel well-disposed again only if the United Nations treats them in accordance with the principles of justice and equity ... by lifting the embargo and desisting from attacks on their dignity and interventions into the internal affairs of their country".

The Security Council on Wednesday, 2 September, expressed concern at the humanitarian situation in Iraq, and particularly Iraq's "continuing failure to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel". The Council urged Iraq, "in the strongest possible terms", to cooperate with the United Nations.
Document S/24520

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